

NEW YORK HERALD

BROADWAY AND ANN STREET.

JAMES GORDON BENNETT,
PROPRIETOR.THE DAILY HERALD. Published every day in the year.
Three cents per copy (Sundays excepted). Ten dollars per
year. Five dollars for six months. Two dollars and fifty cents
for three months, or at a rate of one dollar per month for
any period less than three months. Sunday edition included;
without Sunday edition, eight dollars per year, free of
postage.WEEKLY HERALD.—One dollar per year, free of post-
age.
NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.—Remit in drafts on New
York or Post Office money orders, and where neither of
these can be procured send the money in a registered letter.
All money remitted at risk of sender. In order to insure
attention subscribers wishing their address changed must
give their old as well as their new address.
All business, news letters or telegraphic despatches must
be addressed to NEW YORK HERALD.
Letters and packages should be properly sealed.
Rejected communications will not be returned.
Entered at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., as second
class matter.PHILADELPHIA OFFICE.—No. 112 SOUTH SIXTH
STREET.
LONDON OFFICE OF THE NEW YORK HERALD.—
No. 40 FLEET STREET.
PARIS OFFICE.—Avenue de l'Opera.
SAPLES OFFICE.—No. 7 STRADA PACA.
Subscriptions and advertisements will be received and
forwarded on the same terms as in New York.

4TH YEAR.....NO. 365

AMUSEMENTS TO-DAY AND EVENING.

WALLACK'S—SEE STOPS TO CONQUER.
UNION SQUARE THEATRE—FRENCH FLATS.
DALY'S THEATRE—ARABIAN NIGHT. Matinee.
GRAND OPERA HOUSE—STREETS OF NEW YORK. Matinee.
NEW YORK AQUARIUM—UNCLE YAN'S CARK. Matinee.
BROADWAY OPERA HOUSE—STREETS OF NEW YORK. Matinee.
THEATRE—DEK VERKOUTER SCHAE.
HAVERLY'S THEATRE—THE GALLEY SLAVE. Matinee.
ABBEY'S PARK THEATRE—FAIRFAX.
NEW YORK CIRCUS—HENRY DUMPT. Matinee.
AMERLE'S THEATRE—POOR OF NEW YORK.
GERMANIA THEATRE—DIE NICHTER DES MILLIONAREN.
NIBLO'S GARDEN—HARVEST OF STEEL. Matinee.
STANDARD THEATRE—PRINCESS TOTO.
FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE—PIRATES OF PENZANCE.
SAN FRANCISCO MINSTRELS—THOMPSON STREET FLATS.
COMIQUE—MULLIGAN GARDEN. Matinee.
KOSTER & BIAL'S CONCERT HALL.
TONY PASTOR'S—MRS. DRISCOLL'S PARTY.
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN—ATHLETIC.
JERSEY CITY ACADEMY—MADISON MINSTRELS.

TRIPLE SHEET.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1879.

The probabilities are that the weather in New York and its vicinity to-day will be colder and partly cloudy. To-morrow it will be cold and partly cloudy in the morning, followed by increasing temperature and possibly rains.

WALL STREET YESTERDAY.—Stocks declined about two points, the opening prices being the highest and the closing ones the lowest of the day. Money was very active, 7 per cent being the lowest rate for call loans on stocks, and a "commission" of 1/2 per day being paid in a great many instances. Bonds of all classes were fairly active and strong. Foreign exchange was weak and some of the rates were lowered.

CLARENCE COX'S last hope now lies with the Court of Appeals.

This is a good day to examine that new leaf you turned over last New Year's.

THOUSANDS of people are going to watch the old year out to-night; to-morrow night they will wish they had gone to bed early.

MAYOR COOPER deserves the public gratitude for vetoing the obnoxious Forty-second street and general uptown railroad project.

THE RESIGNATION to Joe Coburn must be postponed, as the Governor declares there is no foundation for the rumor about his pardon.

GOVERNOR VAN ZANT, of Rhode Island, goes upon the very small list of prominent citizens who do not want to hold office; he declines the Russian mission.

POLICE COMMISSIONER VOORHIS' RESOLUTION, practically offering a fire alarm box to every school and factory, will probably lessen materially the losses of life and property in the city.

THE HOSPITAL COLLECTIONS already aggregate seven thousand dollars. The sum seems large, but as the total of a great city's assistance to the most needy of unfortunates it is as disagreeably small.

AS IT APPEARS by the criminal records for the year that about twenty-five hundred arrests have been made of "suspicious" persons who cannot be the same designation be made to cover the keepers of disreputable houses whose character is well known.

HARMONY, to the extent of a working majority, is said to have been restored in the Board of Aldermen by means that were not very expensive, as such things go. This afternoon's meeting will prove whether the story is true, in case the Mayor sends in any nominations.

THE GREAT WEST beats the world for business inspirations. The Denver plumbers have just struck for an additional half dollar a day, having probably learned, by examination of their employers' bills, that no raise short of a princely salary could injure their employers.

IN SPITE of all that may be said to the contrary there are plenty of men in New York who are about as desperate and helpless as the man described under "Hard Lines." That branch of charitable effort that is charged with getting work for people who are unable to find it for themselves is wretchedly inefficient.

NERVOUS PEOPLE will breathe free at learning that the Superior Court, General Term, to which appeal was taken in the Ludlow street arson case, affirms the judgment of the lower court. If such rasals as "firebugs" are to have their punishment mitigated by legal quibbles honest men had better die at once.

THE WEATHER.—The barometer is above the mean in all the districts east of the Mississippi River, the disturbance that was over the St. Lawrence Valley having moved into the ocean off the Nova Scotia coast. Two centres of disturbance are developing within the zone of low pressure which extends from the Western Gulf of Mexico to British Columbia, one over Western Texas and the other over Idaho and Montana. The first mentioned is likely to pass northeastward through the central valleys, where it may probably be overtaken by the one advancing in the Northwest. Rain and sleet fell in the central valleys and the Middle Atlantic States, and snow in the New England States and the lake regions. The weather was cloudy throughout the country except in the Northwest. The temperature fell decidedly in the lake regions during the early portion of the day and in the Middle Atlantic States toward night. Elsewhere it remained nearly stationary. The winds have been brisk on the Middle Atlantic and New England coasts, brisk to high in the Northwest and fresh in the other districts. The weather over the British Islands continues very unsettled. The weather in New York and its vicinity to-day will be colder and partly cloudy. To-morrow it will be cold and partly cloudy in the morning, followed by increasing temperature and possibly rains.

National Conventions.

Nothing could well be more rude, clumsy and unsatisfactory than the party machinery in this country for making Presidential nominations. It is thoroughly unfair by the possibility which it always admits that the choice of the candidate may be controlled by States that can give no electoral votes. Justice would require that the influence of different States in making the nomination should be in proportion to the support they are able to give the ticket. In the next Republican National Convention States like Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee, which can by no possibility give a single electoral vote to the candidate of the party, will have as large a representation as undoubtedly republican States having the same population. Why should States that can contribute nothing toward the election of a ticket be able to dictate its composition? Why should not the ticket be made up by those States which are relied on to elect it?

While it is generally conceded that none of the Southern States will give any electoral votes to the republican candidate they will have more than four-fifths of the number of votes requisite to form a majority of the Convention. Although they must be mere ciphers in the election they will serve in the Convention as ciphers annexed to significant figures multiplying their value and enabling almost any two large republican States to control the nomination if reinforced by the Southern delegates who represent no electoral votes.

At least nine-tenths of the republican party in the Southern States consist of colored voters. It is doubtful whether they will be represented in the Republican National Convention by delegates really chosen by them and sharing their preference as to the Presidential candidate. Within the last three or four years the republican organization in the Southern States has gone to pieces. Unless it should be reconstructed by the negroes themselves the republican delegates from the South will be virtually appointed by the federal office-holders. In that case the Southern votes will be given in accordance with the wishes of the appointing power at Washington. But if the negroes should become deeply interested in some particular candidate, and should thereupon take the bits into their mouths and pay no heed to the official reins, their united choice would be very likely to prevail in the Convention. If Pennsylvania and New York make an early appointment of delegates; if the delegates from these two States should be instructed to vote for the same candidate, and if that candidate should be one who would be the natural and spontaneous preference of the whole mass of colored citizens, New York and Pennsylvania would be able to control the nomination, the Southern delegates being annexed like ciphers, to enable these States to count ten. Under ordinary circumstances, with the republican organization dissolved in the Southern States, the federal office-holders would have no difficulty in appointing the delegates, but if a skillful attempt should be made to arouse the dormant negro sentiment into activity the colored voters might be truly represented in the Convention. If their choice should happen to coincide with that of the united delegations from Pennsylvania and New York the nomination of their candidate would be assured long before the meeting of the Convention. But if the ticket were to be selected by those States which are relied on for electoral votes to insure its success the nomination might fall to a different candidate.

There is no immediate remedy for a state of things which permits Presidential nominations to be controlled by States in which the party can expect no electoral votes. The only way to rectify it is by a change of system which would substitute the choice of Presidential electors by Congressional districts for their election in each State on a general ticket. That would naturally be followed by a corresponding change allowing each district to send its own delegate to the National Convention. But even that would be only a partial remedy, unless political parties should make provision for discriminating between democratic and republican districts. The republican party of New York has made an approximation to fairness in the composition of its State conventions by giving each Assembly district a representation proportioned to the number of votes it polled in the preceding election. Under the district system a similar method would be practicable for national conventions. It would only be necessary to allow each Congressional district one delegate and an additional one for every three thousand or five thousand or some specified number of party votes cast in that district. The national conventions would then fairly represent the voters of the party, and the ticket would be selected by those who could give some assistance in electing it.

The present system is unjust and absurd. Why should States which cannot give a single electoral vote to the party candidate have as much power in nominating him as if they were backed by a strong majority? Both parties follow this absurd plan in the make-up of their national conventions; but, owing to the two-thirds rule, it does not operate so absurdly in the democratic as it does in the republican party. The two-thirds rule was not adopted as a correction of such unfairness, but it has this tendency. It is impossible in a democratic national convention to make up a majority sufficient to nominate a candidate and have the greater part of that majority consist of delegates from States in which there is no chance or expectation of electoral votes. The democratic two-thirds rule would be quite absurd in a national convention which was fairly composed. If the representation were in proportion to the voting power there would be no sense or justice in denying to a bare majority the power to select candidates. But when every convention has a large number of delegates who represent no effective constituencies it is reasonable to adopt some means of curtailing their influence. So far as the two-thirds rule has this tendency it is justifiable, although it is seemingly undemocratic. But it was not

adopted with a view to this consequence. In one or two democratic conventions which were known in advance to be practically unanimous the two-thirds rule was introduced to give greater *clat* to the nomination. In 1844, when Mr. Van Buren was again a candidate and was known to have a majority of the delegates, those precedents were successfully used to defeat him, and the two-thirds rule has been the common law of democratic national conventions ever since. After having been in force for more than forty years there is no likelihood that it will be deviated from so long as the general ticket system prevails in the choice of Presidential electors.

It is a potent instrument for the defeat of candidates whose nomination is not practically secured in advance of the meeting of the Convention. The resolute opposition of one-third of the delegates suffices to defeat any candidate, however strong and popular he may be with the mass of the party. This power will enable the greenbackers to defeat any sound money candidate, if they can control one-third of the delegates. It will enable the South to defeat the nomination of any democratic candidate whom they may dislike. It will enable the friends of any "dark horse" to bring the Convention to a deadlock and hold it there until they make lame ducks of all the prominent candidates. Whatever democratic candidate goes into the Convention with less than two-thirds of the delegates pledged to his support has an excellent chance to be set aside. We therefore warn aspirants for the democratic nomination to put not their trust in "booms."

Alfonso Shot At.

Another attempt to assassinate Alfonso of Spain by another callow cutthroat is reported in the despatches. The attempt was characterized only by its want of intelligent intention and resolute purpose, and failed as to all particulars which should distinguish in a dramatic and artistic sense any real attempt to kill a king. There was the usual noise of two shots, and one more would be-murderer was suddenly in custody, and nobody was hurt. This youth will be coddled as a hero of the communistic impulse for a time, and then be strangled at last; but one of these days the order will be given in the escort of monarchs that such experimenters shall be cut down on the spot by the cavalry, and then these attempts will perhaps become rarer.

The News from Maine.

Our correspondent at Augusta denies, on the authority of Governor Garcelon himself, the report that that gentleman had said he would not submit to adjudication in the Supreme Court the points laid down in Mr. Morrill's letter. It is to be regretted that the correspondent's statement by authority was limited to this mere negative. Everybody will be glad to hear that the Governor has not determined to take the responsibility of deciding for himself a point that he may have decided by a high judicial tribunal; but the country would be even more pleased to hear that the Governor had determined to put the case before the court. All that his denial amounts to, therefore, in its present shape is that he has "not yet" determined to reject the proposition of Mr. Morrill. We should like to know that he had determined to accept it. An important indication of the direction of the drift in this difficulty is given in the report of preparations for the use of force. The arms and ammunition have been taken from the arsenal at Bangor to Augusta, and it is said that the State House is virtually in the possession of an armed force, gathered there by the Governor to be beforehand with the projects of some republican leaders to seize that important strategic point. But it does not follow that this force will be used. The Governor may deem it a proper precaution to have such a force ready on information given of the intentions of certain persons, which information might prove to be without foundation. Indeed, the central point in the whole story is the Governor's incapacity to get accurate information on some points and his capacity to get a superabundance of information on others. Thus it appears that one certificate of the election of certain persons was thrown out because it was not sealed publicly in town meeting. Now, if the Governor could get such minute information on points that did not appear on the returns why could he not also take information as to whether two or four candidates were voted for in certain districts, and so prevent all the trouble? It is stated that the Governor has intimated his intention of putting in force the law for the suppression of sedition and to make examples of such men as Boutelle and Senator Blaine, but in that case he might have to include also some of his friends who spoke for him at Portland last night.

New Year Etiquette.

So many questions have been addressed to the editor of the Herald upon the rules governing the civilities peculiar to New Year's Day that two answers, in addition to those already published, may not be untimely. We would therefore suggest—first, that the customs of good society forbid a gentleman, calling upon a lady, to introduce several friends of his whom the lady never before met. Strange as it may appear to some members of the ruder sex, women prefer to be consulted about persons who desire introduction, and the too common habit of calling with a crowd on New Year's Day results in numerous annoyances to ladies and an equal number of subsequent snubs to men. To the gentler sex we would say that at least half of the troubles that result from offering spirituous refreshments to visitors would be avoided if women did not urge such hospitality in a manner that makes refusal almost impossible. Men who really want to drink do not need to be pressed; the remainder, no matter how numerous their virtuous resolutions or written pledges, are powerless when under the influence of a lady's voice and smile. Minor manners and morals are to be left to the decision of the persons interested, but the two rules upon which we have touched are of prominent and general

interest, and there is no possible excuse for the transgression of either of them.

The Tay Bridge.

In counting the resistance that would have to be overcome before a gale of wind could do harm the constructors of the Tay Bridge were, as the fact proves, fatally at fault. But they were not merely astray in arguing that that could not occur which has now actually occurred. It is seen that they reasoned on certain details from mistaken premises, and their fault is worth especial notice because it is probable that similar false reasoning may be depended upon as proving safety in other somewhat similar cases. For instance, the Scotch engineers counted a pier, a span of the bridge and the weight of a train as the resistance to which the pressure of the wind must be superior to endanger the lives of passengers, and they counted the sum of this resistance as an inert mass. They made the resistance about four times greater than the force that could be applied. But the pier and the span of the bridge should not have been counted, as we now see. This alone would reduce the resistance to a quarter of what they made it. Moreover, the resisting body, thus reduced, should not have been counted as an inert mass, and this would even more materially change the problem. It appears never to have occurred to them as a possibility that the train might be blown from the bridge. They reasoned as if bridge and train were all to be blown over together. They seem, further, never to have had a fancy that the problem to solve was not how much force would overcome a certain inertia, but how a force working in a given direction would vary the operation of another force working in another direction. They did not consider the peculiar effect of the curves in the line on the resistance. As a giant wrestler whom no antagonist could budge if placed solidly on his feet may be brought down by a stroke that a child could give if caught at a critical moment in a strained attitude on tiptoe, so it is with a train which, sweeping around a sharp curve, is practically on tiptoe and at the mercy of many chances. There was a double curve on the Tay Bridge, and the accident appears to have occurred just as the train was sweeping from the first into the second. At that point the last car was like a whip snapper. Imagine the train at that place with the wind lifting and pushing at once and co-operating with the force which the weight and momentum of the train supplied to sweep the last car outward from the rails, and what was, in fact, the real resistance to be overcome? It was only equivalent to the surface supplied by the bevelled flange of the wheels on one side of one car. For when one car left the rails at that point all was over.

The Indian Commission.

If the Ute Indians were actually in collusion with the people who desire their ruin—or at least their exclusion from the State of Colorado—they could scarcely labor more effectively in the interest of those persons than they are doing. Such events as occurred at the White River Agency cannot possibly remain unpunished. If the American people were satisfied that under our present system of Indian relations such crimes could be committed with impunity they would assuredly compel a complete and absolute change of such relations. It is only because the country believes that substantial justice can be done on both sides more effectively as we are than otherwise that it consents to a system in virtue of which the United States pays an enormous annual tribute to several tribes of lordly savages; for a system that does not subject them to our laws, but requires us to feed them, makes us payers of tribute to them, and if this system is complied with only on one side the people will not endure its continuance. This Ute case is likely to be typical as a test for all others. Murders are committed—and even worse crimes—and we call upon the tribe to surrender certain designated perpetrators of these acts. If they are surrendered and punished that is all that could be done if they were our own citizens. But if not surrendered—if the tribe shields them—it assumes the responsibility for the crimes and war will assuredly follow. There seems now no likelihood that such a war can be averted. It remains only to hope that it may be thorough in its effects.

"The Pirates of Penzance" at the Paignton Royal Bijou.

Some persons doubtless are wondering why Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan, while making every effort for a "grand first representation" of the "Pirates of Penzance" in this city on the last evening of the year, selected the afternoon of the preceding Monday as the time and the Bijou Theatre of Paignton as the place of a preliminary "first performance." But it will not surprise anybody who knows the peculiarities of the English law governing the rights of dramatists. The authors would have lost their exclusive right of representation in Great Britain had they permitted the first public performance of the piece to take place out of that country. Choosing a little town on the South Devon coast may, perhaps, as the London News remarks, be "classed among those satirical strokes by which Mr. Gilbert delights to reduce the vexatious and unnecessary formalities of the law to absurdity." But in giving a single, hasty, nominal exhibition, for the sole purpose of satisfying the requirements of the law, there were also obvious business and professional reasons besides satire for avoiding London.

While the "Pirates of Penzance" is kept in manuscript the authors, though foreigners, will retain all their exclusive rights of representation in the United States. These rights are not secured by any statute, but by the common law. The common law property in "Pinafore" was lost because the piece was published in print, and no statutory rights were gained because the authors were foreigners. But Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan aim to secure both English and American rights in their new production. While the latter are guaranteed by the common law the former de-

pend on the statute, and can be enjoyed only on condition of the first performance or first publication of the piece somewhere within the United Kingdom. Should the "Pirates of Penzance" be brought out in this city before it is publicly represented in Great Britain the authors' English rights of representation would thereby be forfeited. The law on this point has been twice tested to his cost by Mr. Boucicault. In 1863 he sued Delafeld for representing the "Colleen Bawn" in England, and the Court held that he had lost his English rights by first performing the play in the United States. The case of the "Shaughraun," tried three years ago, was analogous. This piece was first brought out at Wallack's. It proved an immense success and the author took it to London. There it was kept in manuscript, but Chatterton succeeded in bringing it out at his theatre without license. A suit followed, in which it was decided that Boucicault had forfeited his rights by not giving the British public the benefit of the first performance. Hence Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan are wisely and economically profiting by Mr. Boucicault's costly experience.

The new copyright bill which has been reported by the government, and will doubtless be taken up at the next session of Parliament, contains an important change in the law on the point under consideration. It provides that the author of any dramatic or musical composition which is first printed or publicly performed in a foreign country may secure his English rights by publishing or representing the piece anywhere in the British dominions within three years after its first publication or representation abroad. When this law goes into effect we may look for a decline of the drama at the Royal Bijou Theatre of Paignton.

A Marine Clew to the Anomalous European Weather.

The thermal observations of Atlantic water taken by the Cunard steamships are beginning to bear fruit and yield most interesting results for science. As the Atlantic temperatures dominantly affect the climate of Western Europe an examination of the recorded temperatures of its surface water has been eagerly made to ascertain some clew to the long wet, cold and stormy winter of last year. The observations made on the temperature of the sea every four hours by Captain Watson, of the steamship Algeria, show that for the homeward and outward bound passages that part of the Atlantic traversed by his ship was 3.2 degrees warmer in December, 1878, than in December, 1877. Paradoxical as it may seem the mean temperature of the British Islands in December, 1878, was 8 degrees colder than in the last month of 1877. But Captain Watson's records nevertheless afford a highly plausible solution of the anomalous cold in Europe.

The heat brought by the Gulf Stream into the North Atlantic has been fairly estimated as not less than one-fifth of the whole heat possessed by the surface water of that ocean. About four billions of cubic feet of warm water is hourly poured through the Florida Pass, giving out to the air of the North Atlantic the heat corresponding to a difference in temperature of 25 degrees. When this volume of water is, in any season, augmented or its temperature raised but two or three degrees above its normal condition, the resulting influence upon the weather of Western Europe must be marked. But if, as Captain Watson's thermometric data apparently demonstrate, the vast body of the North Atlantic south of 45 degrees north has the temperature of its surface water elevated three degrees above the normal heat, the most decided climatic effects would result. Fortunately we have the means of verifying Captain Watson's register. The Signal Service observations of the sea water at seven points on the South Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States show that it had an excess of mean temperature of 1.42 degrees in December, 1878, over that of the previous December. The Atlantic water between the twenty-fifth and forty-fifth parallels was, therefore, in the winter of 1878-79 undergoing unusually great evaporation, and the vast volume of moisture then set free, borne in the broad belt of the westerly or "anti-trade" winds, was spread out in a continuous stream to Southern and Central Europe, serving not only as a natural highway for Atlantic storms to travel thitherward, but also as fuel to feed the cyclonic meteors as they broke on the British and French coasts. As Mr. Lockyer, the English physicist, forcibly surmises in his journal Nature, on the 11th inst., "This abnormal distribution of temperature in the Atlantic was more or less immediately connected with the more southerly course taken by our European storms since the end of October, 1878, from which have inevitably resulted the unusual prevalence of easterly and northerly winds and the cold weather we have had since"—a statement which, by the way, powerfully confirms what the Herald has so long contended for, that Atlantic storms do move toward and strike upon the European coasts, and hence that their movements are not without the limits of scientific prediction.

These observations of the sea water over the North Atlantic basin will, as Mr. Lockyer points out, serve as a basis for "something more than a mere guess of the weather of coming seasons." By comparing the sea water thermal observations made by the Signal Service last month on the Gulf and South Atlantic coasts, as given in its "Monthly Review," the great tropical reservoir of the Gulf Stream was then 2.6 degrees warmer than it was in November, 1878. As far back as May last the United States steamer Portsmouth's observations showed an unusually vigorous movement of the Gulf Stream, that ship having been carried northward during a calm fifty-six miles in fourteen hours by the powerful flow of tropical water. We might, therefore, justly infer that the pressure of the southeast trades has, for a considerable time, been exceptionally great, driving an unusually large mass of equatorial water into the Gulf of Mexico and through the Florida Pass into the North Atlantic basin. If this process goes on the European winter of last year may repeat itself in 1880, as it has apparently al-

ready begun to do. But the same process would, as respects this country, in all probability, insure an extensive diffusion of Gulf vapor in a northerly direction, mitigating the rigors of winter in and east of the Mississippi Valley.

It is earnestly hoped all seamen will aid in the grand research seeking to connect Atlantic meteorology with that of Europe and America.

Purifying Wall Street.

The important action taken by the Postmaster General in ordering the interception of the correspondence addressed to certain firms of so-called Wall Street sharpers is open to no other objection than that which is derived from the consideration that the authorities may sometimes make mistakes. Power is given by the statute to prevent the use of the mails for nefarious purposes; and in the exercise of this power the Postmaster General is responsible for the accuracy of his information as to whether any designated person really makes unlawful use of the Post Office. Doubtless these cases were thoroughly examined before action was taken, and we may, therefore, regard the war on this particular class of "brokers" as a proper protection of the unwary public.

PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE.

Baron Friesen, of Germany, is at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

The Russian Naval Department is said to be very corrupt.

The Mexican Minister receives informally on Sunday evenings.

Senator Henry M. Teller, of Colorado, is at the Sturtevant House.

Ex-Secretary of the Navy George M. Robeson is at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

Mr. E. B. Washburne is mentioned as a candidate for Governor in Illinois.

Mr. John Prim, son of the Spanish statesman, called yesterday for home via the White Star line.

Mr. Charles Francis Adams is one of the heaviest taxpayers in Boston, his property being assessed at \$747,000.

Diplomatic hatreds (the London Spectator thinks) are like hatreds contracted in a ship, very keen and very long-lived.

The officers of Christ Church, Alexandria, Va., are endeavoring to sell the Bible used by General Washington. They want to pay a church debt.

Next to the European frontier, says the London Examiner, the Chinese is the most notorious for smuggling, and afterward comes the Caspian.

An English journal says that in St. Petersburg not even a child can be removed from one dwelling to another without the cognizance of the authorities.

Haven't the geographers (says the Chicago Times) made a mistake in locating Maine? The latest news seems to indicate that it borders on the Gulf of Mexico.

The leaves of the silver fir (abies) have a power of motion by which they are raised or depressed, they having palisade cells, which are absent in the comparatively motionless spruce fir (picea).

The English Grenadier Guards are described as ordinary sized young men with light hair, blue eyes and very rosy cheeks. They are said to resemble young curators dressed up in bottled red coats.

The San Francisco Post says that J. C. Flood, of the bonanza firm, will retire from control of the stock market. He has always managed the affairs in San Francisco, while Mackay and Fair have remained at the Nevada mines. Will he succeed Senator Sharon, of Nevada?

Chicago Tribune.—"Mr. Lincoln used to tell a story about a big Hoosier who came to Washington during the war and called on a street Arab for a shine. Looking at the tremendous boots before him he called out to a brother soldier across the street, 'Come over and help, Jimmy; I've got an army contract.'"

A Chinaman in comfortable circumstances takes, in addition to his breakfast, dinner and supper, various light refreshments between meals—the kuo tea leading up to the morning, the kuo teong to the midday and the tien chow to the evening meal, while the cheou ya and the kio yia are partaken of during the night by those who cannot get to sleep.

The London Examiner is opposed to sending persons guilty of minor offences to prison. It says the man who finds he can bear a fortnight's imprisonment is not likely to hesitate so long at a crime in future as he is to whom the terrors of a jail are as yet unknown, and if we would suppress crime it is better that we should not accustom people to its punishment.

A correspondent of the Chicago Tribune writes:—"Governor Garcelon is the most obstinate of men. Congressman Frye, his brother-in-law, told me that Garcelon did not speak to him for over a year on account of political differences; that, as his attorney, when Garcelon had any law business, he would sit in his carriage, send in a note to Frye and receive his opinion in writing, and that, when Garcelon came to Frye's house, he would never go in until he learned that Frye was away from home."

London Spectator.—"Foreign nations, foreign politicians, even foreign governments, can only watch, approach, influence or soothe powerful individuals in other countries through their envoys. Only through them can they learn what their opponents or rivals or friends are really thinking of or intending. They alone can collect in society, from little speeches, from intimates, from, if you will, spies, the information which, when indicated as all powerful, becomes of such terrible importance."

GOVERNOR VAN ZANT DECLINES.

GANDID REASONS WHY HE WILL NOT GO TO ST. PETERSBURG FOR "UNCLE SAM"—HIS MAXIM, "LET WELL ENOUGH ALONE."

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Dec. 30, 1879.

Everybody is surprised at the sudden change of heart of His Excellency Governor Van Zant in declining the mission to Russia. He had fully made up his mind to accept last night, and a well known newspaper editor reported that he saw a telegram which the Governor was on the point of sending to Secretary Evarts accepting the offer. He, however, has reconsidered his decision. To a reporter who called upon the Governor this evening to ascertain the truth of the report that he had declined, he said:

"Yes, I have, and allow me to add that I think I have done a wise thing."

"Were there any special reasons for your declining?" asked the reporter.

"Well, my friends have wished me to accept for some time, but after seriously considering the matter I have concluded not to accept. I believe in the old proverb to 'let well enough alone.' I told a newspaper man yesterday that I might accept, but informed him then that there might be a change."

"Then the matter is definitely settled?"

"Yes, there will be no more of it."

GANDID REASONS.

Subsequently the Governor gave to a Herald correspondent his reasons for declining the mission. These reasons were—first, that the climate was too rigorous for Mrs. Van Zant's health; second, that his business interests would suffer in case he should leave the country; and third, that he would not be able, with the salary of the office, to maintain its dignity in the manner in which his predecessors had done. All things considered he deemed it best to remain at home. He accordingly notified Secretary Evarts of his decision by telegraph, and also mailed to him this evening a letter setting forth his reasons more fully for declining the honor and expressing his thanks for the great compliment which had been paid to Rhode Island through him.

The Governor has been in receipt of numerous letters and telegrams from applicants for a position at the Legation, and while the Herald correspondent was in the Governor's room a cablegram was received from London sent by an aspirant for the position of Secretary.

THE STATE CAPITAL.

ALBANY, Dec. 30, 1879.

Governor Cornell and family took possession of the Executive Mansion this afternoon.

Several Senators, Assemblymen and newly elected State officers reached the city to-day. The former have been interviewed as to the organization of the legislature, but they appear to be entirely devoid of information.